

Statement of David R. Kracke in support of SB 721
House Committee on Health Care
Chairperson Mitch Greenlick
April 29, 2013

We took a legislative step forward with Max's Law (SB 349 in 2009), but the law is not a monolith that can afford to rest on its laurels. Max's Law has resulted in positive change; more important in our national discussion on concussion impacts than arguably any other law in our country (sharing that distinction with Zach's Law in Washington, our neighbor's legislative push contemporaneous with Max's Law). But that is no reason to stop advancing, proactively, toward the goal of reducing the incidence of both concussions, and most importantly, second impact syndrome.

Max's Law requires all high school athletic coaches to receive annual concussion symptom recognition training. It also requires all concussed players to receive clearance from a qualified medical professional before that player can again join the teammates on the playing field. The current law protects high school athletes, but that protection is not enough. There are other vulnerable athletes not covered by the requirements of Max's Law.

High school athletes are generally between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, and we all know that before almost all high school athletes ever play high school sports, they have played organized sports for years through the youth league ranks. Max's Law does not cover youth athletic coaches below the high school level, nor does it cover the coaches of non-high school recreational league coaches for high school aged athletes who play on organized sports teams outside of the high school arena.

The problem, however, is that a concussion knows no bounds with regard to age or athletic league. When it comes to inflicting its devastating injury, concussions afflict the very young as much, and arguably even more, than they afflict high school aged athletes. Concussions occur in recreational league settings, youth league settings and city league settings as often as they occur in high school league settings. Doctors I know report an increasing incidence of second impact syndrome among our youngest athletes, illustrating with unfortunate force where our next efforts should be focused.

We need to do more to protect our most vulnerable young athletes against concussions, and we need to do more to educate those coaches who are there nurturing these nascent athletes as they begin their athletic endeavors.

Our youngest players deserve to have educated coaches just like their high school counterparts. Max's Law served a tremendous purpose in 2009 and now we need to continue with the passage of SB 721, which, out of respect for Jenna Sneva, I refer to as Jenna's Law. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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